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C O N F I D E N T I A L KATHMANDU 001547

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR SA/INS, PRM/ANE

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TAGS: [PREF](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [NP](#)

SUBJECT: NEPAL: OFFICE OF TIBET REPRESENTATIVE MEETS  
AMBASSADOR MORIARTY

REF: A. KATHMANDU 1096

[B](#). KATHMANDU 1418

[C](#). KATHMANDU 1479

Classified By: Ambassador James F. Moriarty; Reasons 1.4 (b/d).

[1](#). (C) SUMMARY: Wangchuk Tsering, Director of the Office of Tibet, outlined for Ambassador Moriarty on August 5 the issues facing Tibetan refugees, both those transiting Nepal to India and those resident in Nepal. The Ambassador informed Wangchuk that he had raised many of these issues in his meetings thus far with GON officials, and that the Embassy would continue to push Tibetan refugee concerns. END SUMMARY.

[2](#). (C) Highlighting the need for Nepal-resident Tibetan refugees (those who arrived before 1990 and their children -- about 20,000 people) to be furnished with identification, Wangchuk explained that he had sent a list of more than 4,000 paperless refugees to UNHCR to raise with the Home Ministry (Ref A). Particularly in light of the insurgency, these refugees needed identification, both to move about freely in Nepal, as well as to seek higher education. Wangchuk also noted that Nepal had never granted these refugees the right to work here in Nepal, although many were doing so just the same.

[3](#). (C) Wangchuk outlined the problems faced by refugees attempting to enter Nepal from Tibet for onward transit to India (on average about 2,500/yr). Aside from the physical dangers of the passage, he noted, thus far the Nepali Home Ministry had not issued the terms of the "Gentleman's Agreement" in writing to border officials. When staff from UNHCR or the Tibetan Refugee Reception Center (TRRC) traveled to the border to receive refugees, border officials generally accepted a UNHCR letter asking that the refugees be allowed to travel on to Kathmandu, but often expressed reluctance to release refugees without clear instructions from the Home Ministry. The Ambassador told Wangchuk that he had raised this issue with both the Prime Minister and Home Minister (Refs B and C), but had not received a clear answer. The Prime Minister appeared to believe everyone at the border was aware of the need to allow transit of legitimate refugees. Wangchuk then told the Ambassador how transiting Tibetan refugees, a particularly vulnerable group, had faced harassment and had been robbed by police occasionally and Maoists regularly, especially when forced to travel from the border to Kathmandu by road. Wangchuk stated that he had asked UNHCR to provide one or two counselors to the TRRC to help the refugees that had been traumatized by such experiences.

[4](#). (C) Wangchuk also explained that the Chinese Embassy had made the Tibetan issue their number one priority in Nepal. The Chinese had exerted great pressure on Nepali officials to prevent resident Tibetans from holding their celebrations, and had also pressured the Nepalis to force refugees to return to Tibet (Ref A). The Chinese had highlighted Tibetan refugees as an obstacle in the bilateral relationship. Wangchuk stated that while it was impossible to know if refugees had been turned back at the border, he was unaware of any recent refoulements of Tibetans who had made it past the border areas into Nepal.

[5](#). (C) Ambassador Moriarty assured Wangchuk that the Embassy would continue to push the GON to issue written instructions to border officials, and would also continue its close cooperation with UNHCR on behalf of the Tibetans.  
MORIARTY